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Note verbale dated 27 April 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1166 (XII) of 26 November 1957 on the establishment of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and subsequent resolutions of the Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council relating to increases in the membership of the Executive Committee, has the honour to communicate to him the request of the Government of Ecuador to join the membership of the Executive Committee on the basis of broader geographical representation of countries which have shown interest in this field.

Ecuador has given its full support to the promotion and protection of the rights and freedoms of the human person. It has also, historically and traditionally, opened its doors to refugees who have come to seek protection for their lives and liberty. Ecuador demonstrated its unfailing political will in that regard by acceding to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees on 17 August 1955 and to the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees on 6 March 1969.

During the 1970s and 1980s Ecuador welcomed as refugees or asylum-seekers, without any form of discrimination, all those who felt persecuted by dictatorial military regimes and, in general, all persons under threat of violence. In 1999, as a consequence of the current situation in a neighbouring country, which caused massive cross-border flows of displaced persons, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees set up a liaison office in Quito for the purpose of classifying such refugees, taking international measures for their protection and seeking lasting solutions.

The Permanent Mission of Ecuador therefore requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to initiate the procedure for broadening the membership of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. If it becomes a member of the Executive Committee, the Government

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of Ecuador looks forward to playing a constructive part in accordance with its well-known position on refugee issues and its deep commitment to the noble cause served by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.